

From: Don Allen
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I believe the settlement with Microsoft is entirely inadequate. There is basically no penalty imposed and few restrictions on future action by Microsoft. I think the only way to prevent Microsoft from continuing to exploit its monopolistic position is to split the Operating System into a different company from its other software offerings. By allowing these to continue to be developed by the same company, there is no incentive for them to expose interfaces, or reason for them not to continue to imbed unrelated products into the operating system. This combination also stifles development of these products for other operating systems - does anyone think that the MS Office suite would not be available on Unix, Solaris, or Linux if it was owned by anyone else? Other than Lotus Smartsuite and Star Office, neither of which has a significant market share, there are no other office suites left on the market. I remember when there were over a dozen word processors, many spread sheet programs, and specialized packages for publishing. Now you have basically one choice, which is expensive and provides functions not needed or used by most of the market. I believe that if there were other choices, this software would be offered in various price ranges with functionality more in line with users needs. Microsoft has been innovative in software development, but this is not what has made them what they are today - it is their willingness to push others out of the market (most word processors, Netscape, etc.) or buy them (Visio, Fox Software, etc.) to eliminate the competition, then raise prices and justify it by pointing to functionality that is not needed or used by the majority of the market.

In summary, I think the settlement is totally inadequate. Only a separation of at least the operating system from the other software is required to once again stimulate development and innovation in the software market place. Microsoft now is a much bigger threat than IBM was when it was broken up, and I believe the remedy should be at least as severe, if not more so.

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"How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? Four. Calling a
tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

-- Abraham Lincoln